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Jobless UPists stormed party Hq.

-As party headquarters nearly turns into a boxing ring



Boakai influences investigation

-Critics

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Continental News

Chad foils attempt to destabilise country - minister

Chad's government has said security forces had thwarted an alleged effort to destabilise the country on Wednesday night, after a group of people attacked the presidential palace in the capital, N'Djamena. "An attempt at destabilisation has been foiled. Nineteen people died and six were injured, including 18 assailants and one soldier," Foreign Minister Abderaman

out by people who were intoxicated. "They stabbed four guards, killing one and seriously injuring two others. A fourth guard was also injured, but his life is not in danger," the minister added. He said that the attackers managed to penetrate a short distance into the premises of the presidency before being neutralised by security forces. "I arrived on the scene shortly after the shooting, and I was

any specific information about those who had carried out the assault saying that there now needed to be an investigation. Following the incident on Wednesday, tanks were seen in the area and all roads leading to the palace were closed, the AFP news agency reported. Chad is a landlocked country in northern-central Africa which, since gaining independence from France in 1960, has seen frequent periods of instability and fighting, most recently between government forces and those of Islamist group Boko Haram. It is led by President Mahamat Déby, who was installed by the military in 2021 after his father, Idriss Déby, was killed in a battle with rebel forces after 30 years in power. Wednesday's incident came just hours after a visit to the former French territory by China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, who met Déby and other senior officials. Late last month, Chad held a set of parliamentary elections that the government touted as the first step in a transition from military to civilian rule. Opposition groups, however, urged their supporters to boycott the vote over concerns about voter fraud. Chad previously hosted a French military base, which France used to provide logistical and intelligence support to Chad's army as well as take part in regional counter-terrorism operations. In November, it ended its defence co-operation agreement with France, a move that Koulamallah said would allow Chad to "assert its full sovereignty".



Foreign Minister Abderaman Koulamallah seen in a video apparently recorded at the presidential palace in N'Djamena

Koulamallah told state TV. He added that 24 individuals armed with knives, rather than guns, had attacked the guards around the presidential palace. Calm has now returned to N'Djamena. Earlier, sources close to the government had said clashes had occurred between security forces and "terrorist elements". But Koulamallah described the attack as a "disordered and incomprehensible attempt" carried

impressed by the military deployment. We have a very good army, and the Chadians can sleep soundly. Our country is well guarded," he said. "We found that they had a lot of alcohol, small bottles of water filled with alcohol. It looks like whiskey or something like that. Also some drugs, they were completely drugged, at least the survivors." Six people have been arrested in connection with the attack but the minister did not give

US accuses RSF of Sudan genocide and sanctions its leader

The US has accused the Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of committing genocide and imposed sanctions on its leader. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday said Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, was being punished for his role in "systematic" atrocities against the Sudanese people during the 20-month conflict. He said the RSF and allied militias were responsible for the murder of "men and boys - even infants", as well as brutal sexual violence against women on ethnic grounds. The militias have also targeted fleeing civilians and murdered innocent people escaping the conflict, Blinken said. "Based on this information, I have now concluded that members of the RSF and allied militias have

committed genocide in Sudan," he said. In response, the RSF accused the US of double standards and failing to effectively address the ongoing crisis. "The decision... expresses the failure of the [US President Joe] Biden administration to deal with the Sudanese crisis and the double standards it

followed [with regards to the crisis]," Hemedti's adviser, El-Basha Tbaeq, said in a post on his X account. He added that this may complicate the Sudanese crisis and hinder negotiations to address the root causes of the conflict. The RSF has been fighting the Sudanese military since April 2023, and there has been a growing outcry about its conduct during the war.



Allies of RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo accused the US of double standards

Mozambique tense as opposition leader returns from exile

Supporters of Mozambique's opposition leader Venâncio Mondlane have been injured as police tried to break up the crowds who had come to meet him after his return from self-imposed exile on Thursday. He had left the country saying he thought his life was in danger following October's disputed presidential election that sparked deadly protests. Mondlane landed at the main airport in the capital, Maputo, amid tension and heavy security, with thousands having gathered to welcome him. His return came ahead of next week's swearing-in of Daniel Chapo as president. He was the candidate of the ruling Frelimo party, and was confirmed as the winner of October's poll by the constitutional court. The final official results from declared by the country's highest court just over a fortnight ago gave Chapo 65%

which dozens of people have been killed. On Thursday, three people were shot and injured at one of the capital's markets following a brief rally held by Mondlane, police spokesperson, Orlando Mudumane said. Witnesses said that as the police were trying to disperse the crowd shots were fired. Those injured were then taken to hospital. There are other unconfirmed reports of fatalities. The police spokesperson also told journalists that two off-duty officers had been attacked and killed in another province - Nampula. In his first comments on arrival in the country, Mondlane said that he was ready to talk about how to resolve the tension over the disputed poll, which he says was stolen from him. "I'm here in the flesh to say that if you want to negotiate... I'm here," he said. He added that he had come back to speak out against "atrocities" which he said were being committed against his supporters and to defend himself against allegations of criminal responsibility. He also said he would "continue



Venâncio Mondlane maintains he won last year's presidential election alleging that the poll was rigged

of the vote and Mondlane, in second place, with 24%. Frelimo has been in power for the past five decades since independence from Portugal. After having emerged from the airport building, video shows Mondlane kneeling on the ground with a Bible in his hand being cheered by supporters. The 50-year-old Pentecostal preacher began to pray and then said that he had won the election. "I, Venancio Mondlane, president-elect by the Mozambican people... elected by the genuine will of the people - swear on my honour to serve the Mozambican homeland and its people," he declared. He said he was returning to be closer to the protest movement that has seen weeks of nationwide demonstrations in

fighting for this country and preventing the continuation of the current situation". Mondlane has been organising protests through broadcasts on Facebook, but over the weekend announced his impending return, saying they "don't need to chase me anymore". In a defiant message he said: "If [the authorities] want they can kill me, but the fight will continue". head of his landing, the airport was heavily guarded with police officers trying to prevent Mondlane's supporters from reaching the area. Mondlane said his return was "a unilateral decision" that did not result from any political agreement. He has previously said he would install himself as president on 15 January. BBC

Since the October election, waves of protests have left more than 270 people including protesters, children and members of the security forces dead, according to rights groups.

EDITORIAL

Looking forward to a smooth sailing

Liberians look forward with great hope in 2025 for the smooth sailing of the government and the state and for ultimate political and economic stability. 2024, which ushered in a new government here, saw the Motherland sailing on troubled waters characterized by political tension, uncertainty, fragility, and economic hardship.

Due to missteps, heightened tension, bickering, and near instability, 2024 did not achieve much for this country, with poverty staring at the population. Many parents could not afford to send their children to school while businesses, including commercial banks, were on the verge of closure because of insolvency and seeming recession.

But if we did not get it right last year, 2025 provides a fresh opportunity for the government, citizens, and our business partners to dream again, tighten the bolts, and take off for greater heights, for the upper space is the only option.

This means that the government that took an oath to provide an enabling environment for economic activities and stability must keep to its promise of creating a better country than it met rather than the other way around.

It is a disgrace that during the period in review under the new administration, the University of Liberia failed to reopen largely due to a lack of funds to pay part-time lecturers and to appoint a new president.

Mismanagement of public money took center stage in the first year of the Boakai administration from the 55th Legislature to the Executive, particularly the Ministry of Public Work to the National Port Authority, where millions were spent just on salary, so much so that the NPA could not contribute to the national budget.

The mismanagement of state resources in 2024 under the new administration left many ordinary Liberians wondering whether transparency and accountability no longer exist in public service.

With a new year here, we as Liberians, particularly those entrusted with public offices, should do things differently in the state's interest, for the Motherland is all we have as citizens.

We should all be reminded that no amount of foreign support will fix this nation unless we Liberians sincerely desire better for ourselves and for the next generation.

President Boakai and his government should stand up to the task of nation-building instead of paying lip service. We have heard lots in words, but we need deeds right now!

Happy New Year to our Readers



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COMMENTARY

By Woochong Um,
Thiago Barral

What Climate Justice Means for Latin America and the Caribbean

RIO DE JANEIRO/NEW YORK - November's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, dubbed the "Finance COP," left many deeply disappointed - for good reason. While the pledge to mobilize \$300 billion in climate finance by 2035 is a good start, it falls far short of what is needed to accelerate the development of low-carbon energy systems in low- and middle-income countries.

Improving access to renewable energy is particularly urgent in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), where 60 million people live without reliable power and 16 million lack even basic access to electricity. This energy gap underscores the need for sustainable and inclusive solutions.

Accelerating the global energy transition depends on advancing economic and social development. One way to achieve this is to integrate modern, sustainable energy into every industry, community, and household across the region, ensuring that the benefits of long-term development are widely shared.

To be sure, LAC countries have made major strides toward universal energy access, with 60% of their power coming from renewables and more than 98% of the region's population connected to electricity grids. But progress has slowed to a crawl. Since 2010, electrification rates have increased by only three percentage points, a clear sign that conventional approaches are not enough to close the remaining access gaps.

Consider Haiti, where just 47% of the population has access to electricity, and communities in many remote areas rely on expensive and polluting fossil-fuel generators. Similarly, vast areas in countries like Guatemala and Bolivia still lack reliable power infrastructure. This has profound consequences for economic development, as reliable electricity is needed to deliver clean water, improve health care and education, and enable small businesses to grow.

Despite efforts by governments and the private sector, achieving universal energy access remains costly and technically challenging, particularly for the countries most affected by climate change. These challenges are compounded by high financing costs, political and regulatory instability, and limited domestic credit capacity, all of which impede energy investment across the region.

To tackle this daunting challenge, policymakers must adopt a new strategy that focuses on improving

stakeholder coordination, increasing efficiency, and enabling lower-income countries and communities to take the lead. Testing and scaling new technologies and implementing financial mechanisms that channel increased resources are also vital for effective, multisector government programs.

The Universal Access Coalition, launched at the Energies of the Amazon Conference in Belém, Brazil, following November's G20 summit, is a prime example of this approach. By bringing together governments, private companies, multilateral organizations, development-finance institutions, and civil-society groups, the UAC seeks to mobilize resources, drive innovation, and advocate for universal energy access.

By fostering cooperation among stakeholders, the UAC aims to promote innovative technological solutions. For example, distributed renewable energy, such as mini-grids and solar home systems, represents a faster, more cost-effective alternative to traditional grid expansion in remote regions with low population density. The Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, in partnership with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, is also investing in mesh grids - decentralized networks designed to deliver reliable electricity to underserved areas.

LAC countries' efforts must advance the broader goal of revitalizing global efforts to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 7, which calls for universal access to clean, affordable energy by 2030. Targeted government programs in Brazil, such as Energies of the Amazon and Light for All (Luz para Todos), demonstrate how multi-stakeholder approaches can facilitate community-led, equitable initiatives.

Ahead of COP30 in Belém this year, policymakers must reassess the effectiveness of the global response to the existential threat of climate change and commit to bold, decisive action. By harnessing the collective power of governments, civil society, and the private sector, we can unlock LAC countries' immense renewable-energy potential, transforming the region into a model for sustainable development.

But success cannot be measured in megawatts alone. Energy solutions must actively engage local and indigenous communities and ensure they play a meaningful role in planning and decision-making. A just energy transition is more than a moral imperative - it is the only way to meet global climate goals, build climate resilience, and deliver equitable growth.

OP-ED

By Richard Haass

Hail to the Fallen Chief

NEW YORK – James Earl “Jimmy” Carter, the 39th president of the United States, was arguably the country’s greatest ex-president. He focused more on doing good than on doing well. He helped build homes for those in need. He played a major role in eradicating Guinea worm disease in many countries, which as recently as the mid-1980s infected millions of people who drank parasite-contaminated water. He observed countless elections around the world to ensure that the voting and counting were free and fair.

At the same time, the praise for Carter’s post-presidency is for many an indirect way of criticizing his administration. Such criticism, though, badly underestimates Carter’s accomplishments, especially in the realm of foreign policy.

The Panama Canal Treaties in 1977 paved the way for a peaceful transfer of control of that vital waterway from the United States to Panama in 1999. Nationalist-inspired violence was averted, and the Canal stayed open and operated as it always had. What made it all the more impressive was that Carter pressed ahead with the transfer, brushing aside unwarranted but strong domestic criticism of what his opponents portrayed as a giveaway.

A year later, the Camp David Accords created peace between Egypt and Israel. The agreement set an important precedent, to be followed years later by Jordan and more recently by other Arab countries. The Camp David Accords didn’t bring peace to the Middle East – Syria never followed suit, and the Palestinian issue was allowed to fester – but it did eliminate the potential for a major attack on Israel from its neighboring countries, which had occurred in 1967 and 1973.

January 1979 brought the full normalization of diplomatic relations between the US and the People’s Republic of China. Carter thus completed the process initiated by President Richard Nixon, and created the basis for a Sino-American relationship that hastened the end of the Cold War and led to China’s integration into the global economy.

The Carter administration also successfully completed negotiation of the second strategic arms limitation treaty with the Soviet Union (SALT II), which was signed in June 1979. This pact stabilized the nuclear competition between the two superpowers, helping to ensure that the Cold War stayed cold until its end a decade later.

Carter was committed to peace but was no pacifist. He adjusted to the geopolitical shifts following the Islamic revolution in Iran, which ousted the Shah and brought an anti-American regime to power in early 1979, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan later that year. Defense spending increased significantly. Sanctions were introduced. New military deployments were undertaken in Europe. The administration established what became the forerunner of Central Command, which coordinates US military forces in the Middle East, and articulated a doctrine in the president’s name that underscored US interests in the wider region.

Given this record, which also included espousal of support for human rights as a component of US foreign policy, why was Carter not held in higher esteem? One reason is that he suffered from the fate of many one-term presidents, who by being defeated are judged to have been unsuccessful. Such assessments are common but misplaced: both Carter and George H.W. Bush accomplished more in four years than many presidents have in eight.

Carter also paid a significant price for his economic record, which included high inflation, double-digit interest rates, and gasoline shortages. The sour public mood was magnified by the November 1979 Iranian takeover of the US embassy in Tehran and the ensuing hostage crisis. The attempt to rescue the American hostages in April 1980 failed, the result of helicopter breakdowns, bad weather, and bad luck. Carter might well have been re-elected had the mission succeeded. But it wasn’t to be.

An engineer by training, Carter lacked the political skills to help Americans get through tough times. He was not a natural politician. On the contrary, his election was in many ways a reaction to Watergate and President Gerald Ford’s subsequent pardon of Nixon. Carter’s modesty, honesty, and outsider background helped him win the 1976 election. But these traits did not help him much once in office.

Carter the man was easier to respect than like. Full disclosure: I worked during his presidency in the Department of Defense, but was too junior to have much interaction with him. I came to know him later. In September 1993, we both found ourselves on the White House lawn to witness the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. I turned to him and said, “Mr. President, you should feel more than a little satisfaction, as what you did at Camp David made today possible.” His reaction was not what I expected: “They should have done this years ago when I was president.”

Still, as time passes, it will be his record that will matter most, and it is more than likely that Carter’s stock with historians will rise. As it should. The country and the world were better off for his presidency.

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OPINION

By J. Bradford DeLong

American Idiots

BERKELEY – The threat of a Christmastime government shutdown sparked by America’s chief Scrooges, Elon Musk, Donald Trump, and J.D. Vance, has been narrowly averted. Nonetheless, it is worth reviewing what happened, because the episode perfectly foreshadows the dysfunctional governance that awaits the United States (and the world) when Trump takes office in January.

On the eve of the December 20 deadline for passing a bill to keep the federal government funded, the US House and Senate leadership arrived at a compromise that would buy them another three months. Neither party was particularly happy with the deal, but all could live with it. They had the votes to pass it, and President Joe Biden’s staff was willing to put it in front of him for his signature.

But then Musk went berserk, fueling a “backlash” to the stopgap bill with “false and misleading claims,” as Politicoput it, and stirring “Republicans into a frenzy with 100-plus posts on X.” Among his inaccuracies was that the bill would fund the development of biological weapons, when in fact it would fund labs where any future plague could be contained and studied.

(We should not forget that COVID-19 was not nearly as infectious or deadly as, say, Ebola; we cannot count on being so lucky next time.) Musk also falsely claimed that each member of Congress would get a 40% pay raise, when in fact they are scheduled to get a 3.8% cost-of-living bump regardless of the bill under consideration. According to Musk, the bill contained a \$3 billion subsidy for a new stadium for the Washington Commanders (NFL football), when in fact it would transfer the site of RFK Stadium – where no NFL team plays or has plans to play – to the District of Columbia government so that the site can be redeveloped.

These are just a few of Musk’s many falsehoods. They were plain as day, and yet Musk succeeded in intimidating Republicans with his promise that “any member of the House or Senate who votes for this outrageous spending bill deserves to be voted out in 2 years!” Instead of pointing out that Musk does not know what he is talking about, Republicans fell into line.

According to what GOP representatives were saying as of the morning of December 18, Trump himself had no problem with the bill. Yet by that afternoon, he and Vance had gone on the offensive, calling congressional Republicans “foolish and inept” for “allowing our country to hit the debt ceiling in 2025.” Now, they must pass a “temporary funding bill WITHOUT DEMOCRAT GIVEAWAYS combined with an increase in the debt ceiling. Anything else is a betrayal of our country.”

In any case, as of December 19, the Democratic leadership in the House no longer knew who was in charge and who they were supposed to be negotiating with. Is Mike Johnson really the Speaker of the House, asked Jamie Raskin, “Or is it Donald Trump? Or is it Elon Musk? Or is it somebody else?” (In fact, Senator Rand Paul floated the idea of installing Musk as Speaker.)

In the end, Johnson and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries cobbled together a last-minute deal that includes substantial policy concessions to Democrats and no increase to the debt limit, an outcome that amounted to a policy defeat for Trump, Musk, and Vance. But they won’t care, because policy does not concern them. Trump and the incoming Republican congressional majorities know they have the fervent support of predominantly low-information – or downright misinformed – voters. And those voters won’t care (or even know) that more Democrats than Republicans voted for Johnson’s House bill (prompting Musk to ask, “So is this a Republican bill or a Democrat bill?”).

Such is the state of American politics and governance today. It now channels the performative style of professional wrestling. The basic democratic decision loop – in which voters elect officeholders who devise policies with effects that inform the outcome of subsequent elections – is now totally broken.

There will be consequences, though, and it is not entirely clear that Trump, Musk, and Vance have factored them into their calculus. As Paul Krugman points out, “since the election financial markets have clearly been betting that Trump will do very little of what he promised during the campaign ... discount[ing] the disastrous consequences that would follow” from trade wars, mass deportations, and so forth.

But the market increasingly appears to be mistaken. An unnecessary and avoidable “government shutdown in response to completely false claims about what’s in an innocuous short-term funding measure suggests that the peddlers of misinformation are high on their own supply.”

Could Republican legislators regain the ability to communicate with their own political base? Could Democrats win durable, substantial legislative majorities in the 2026 midterm elections? Anything is possible, but I’m not betting on it. There is every reason to expect America’s largely broken federal government to do immense damage to the country – and Trump hasn’t even taken office yet.

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Lord, is this now a “House of Cards”?

Dear Father: You know, for the last few months, our chiefs at the Traditional Council have been busy trying to remove their Paramount Chief. Some say, they want to move him because he na want to play ball, others say, ley man can't act like society man, so him mon go.

But ley man too say, him na going anywhere. But ley man da Kru man na. Ley way Kru people get hard hay. Da small pepper they put in da boy noise.

Aah, da lay thing sef there.

But Father, leh put all joke aside, this thing ay serious ooh. They people na turn our Traditional Council into a House of Cards?

Tell me something!

Yes, oh Father. Do you know that ley Footballer people thought they wor going to sacrifice ley Paramount chief, because they say ley man da na their own man?

So, they went to do their math na, they say for ley sake of the Kountry Giant return in 2029, ley Paramount chief being there will put sand in their gari. So, ley best thing to do was to remove him and put him deputy paramount chief there who is from their camp.

Now, while they were doing this, they went in bed with ley Oldman children them, not knowing say one of ley Oldman sons was being prepared to take over as Paramount chief.

Now, you na see ley way power is playing? So, everybody was playing everybody, until boom! Ley Footballer children come to know say that all ley thing them they were doing was to put ley Oldman son in power.

Da where ley Footballer children them having ley problem na. They know say they na come too far to go back.

So, to make things happen quick, quick, ley Papay na step inside-him say ley Paramount chief mon resign.

You say whatin!

Father, da benny seed popping in my mouth! Ley people doing everything to make sure da hard hay Kru man move from there.

What they na do?

Father, haven't you heard da they na remove all ley Blue Uniform people them from around him?

You joking!

Father da na joke ooh. They say even ley Papay and him people them say da ley Chief them who want remove ley Paramount Chief they want to do business with.

Ley other night, ley Papay na go call ley man to him official residence stopping place just to tell him to resign?

You say whatin?

Da Fire, be sitting down there let people be lying to you da ley Papay innocent-puaah because he can act like slow poison?

They say ley Papay say, he na wan work with this Paramount Chief, he wan him own Paramount Chief.

The other day, they mon come go to ley Palavar Hut again. Ley Elder them say, all ley thing them ley chief them doing to remove their Paramount Chief ay wrong.

The next week, ley Papay say, da their own they talking, all him know, he na wan see this man as Paramount Chief-ley man mon resign.

Da lie!

Father, da na joke oo. Ley Papay say, him people say, they wan ley Paramount Chief job for their party so anything they say that what him will go bye-see trouble.

So, what happen to ley people from ley Footballer camp na?

Father, ley people from ley Footballer camp na stick in ley middle. Shame na grab them. So, to put up some dry face, they say, they na suspend their man.

And all this one, ley Kru man say he na going nowhere. Da Kru man hay hard like iron rock. Oh, you na hear ley thing him say eh. Him say if they leh, they mon move all him security them, all him know, him still Paramount chief.

Hmm, da na small thing happening in your village oo.

Yes, oh, Father. But ley thing here is, ley people na know Kru man. Ley people hay so hard da during ley slave trade, ley slave owner them used to make announcement and say-they mon na bring Kru man because ley Kru people use to bear gee on ley ship and make all ley other slave them to bear gee too.

So, ley only way they had peace was to put ley Kru man in charge on him friend them-da how ley started playing their guitar them and today we have highlife music.

You can play with Kru man?

Father da na joke ooh-ley people hay hard.

But ley Oldman too ya, him na see nobody to go mess with but Kru man...

Starts from Back page **Ex- Minister Akerele seeks Supreme Court's**

declined to meet with elders.

The Supreme Court's opinion reaffirmed its role as the final arbiter on constitutional matters, as outlined in Article 66 of the Liberian Constitution, and clarified its jurisdiction in adjudicating disputes within the legislature. A key part of the opinion was its interpretation of Articles 33 and 49, which govern the composition and operation of the House of Representatives. The Court emphasized that actions taken outside the framework of these articles would be considered ultra vires, beyond legal authority. Specifically, it pointed out the lack of constitutional mechanisms to compel the attendance of absent members of the House and called for alignment with constitutional guidelines in legislative operations.

The opinion stems from the controversy surrounding the decision of some members of the House, who dubbed themselves as the majority bloc, to remove Speaker Koffa, which was done without full

adherence to the constitutional process.

On October 17, 2024, 47 members of the House read a resolution to remove Koffa, citing allegations of misconduct and administrative incompetence.

This action was later followed by an official vote on November 21, 2024, by the “Majority Bloc,” which removed Koffa from his position with support from 50 representatives. The Supreme Court's decision has now pressured the House to comply with constitutional requirements in such matters.

The former minister, who served under Ex-president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, believes the lack of clarity and varying interpretations of the Supreme Court's position have led to significant public concern.

Akerele and other voices call for greater transparency and legal guidance to ensure that all actors understand and follow the constitutional framework. Editing by Jonathan Browne

Starts from page 11 **Boakai prejudices Capitol**

happened, it’s something of arson”, Fahnbulleh argues.

He thinks that allegations made against the government are sentimental only because the UP-led government appointed IG Coleman; therefore, he is supposed to be a UP police officer instead of a national police officer. “I say a big no to that because the police IG is the Director of the Liberia National Police, and as a professional man, he needs to do the right thing, and that is the objective lens through which I am looking at him.

But another Liberian, Edwin Massally, urges the public to desist from, in his words, “politicization of the investigation,” adding

that it’s saddening that people would make damning statements against a historical site gutted by fire. According to him, the police are investigating void of politics because he has not heard about any political interference since the process started.

I think what we need to do now is to allow the investigation to go on, listen to the evidence, and we can render a decision, but to speak loosely now, it’s not good. I think the police need to do their work. Let’s wait for the outcome, for the fact that there are persons of interest”, he pleads. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

Starts from page 6 **Ecobank-Liberia loses appeal**

government, through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) at the time, had communicated with the bank, which the accused bank denied through written communication with the ministry.

The bank also denied ever participating in publishing and discussing the account statements in the media. It proceeded to dismiss its former employee, Yussif Kromah, one of the co-defendants in the case, thereby giving the government ownership of the said account.

"Since the government is the owner of the subject account, acting by and through LISGIS and the MFDP, it is best positioned to interpose response to Smith’s complaint to accord complete relief in the case," the bank argued.

Ecobank-Liberia prays the judge for an order to join the government, acting by and through the LISGIS and the MFDP as a party to the main action of damages for Wrong by Attachment in compliance with the mandate of Section 5.5(1) of the Civil Procedure Law, but was denied by the court. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

JUDICIAL BRANCH
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

BEFORE HIS HONORABLE SCHEAPLOR R. DUNBAR ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE

THE COURT: SMITH M. KROMAH OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, LIBERIA, PETITIONER PRAYING COURT FOR A DECREE FOR A CHANGE OF NAME TO BE CHANGED, REGARDED, CALLED AND KNOWN AS "DOUMBOUYA ISMAEL SESAY"

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME

THE PETITIONER BY AND THRU HER LEGAL COUNSEL FILED A PETITION BEFORE THIS COURT REQUESTING THIS HONORABLE COURT TO ORDER THE CHANGE OF HER NAME FROM SMITH M. KROMAH TO "DOUMBOUYA ISMAEL SESAY".

During the hearing, the Petitioner testified that the Change of her name requesting this Honorable Court is intended to claim his biological father name so as to conform to his documents. After conducting the necessary interrogations required by law in these proceedings, the Court observed that the intention is just and legal and that there is no objection to the change of name proposed by him.

That the Petitioner having shown with justification and satisfaction that she was born on 24TH day of August A.D. 1957 in Lofa County, Republic of Liberia, unto the name of Mr. Mohammed Doumbouya Sesay and Mrs. Makula Kanneh all the Republic of Liberia, and that the Change of his name will substantially promote his interest in all of the understandings and more firmly and that he has met all legal requirements for the Change of his name in this jurisdiction.

The Petition having been heard, same is hereby ordered granted and we now render that the name Smith M. Kromah be changed to "Doumbouya Ismael Sesay" beginning this 9th Day of January A.D. 2025. That all documents signed by the Petitioner herein prior to this decree remain valid.

THIS DECREE shall be registered in the Office of the Registrar of DEEDS and other Official Documentations within (10) days from this date and also be published twice in any recognized Newspaper operating in the Republic of Liberia within twenty (20) days from this date. AND IT IS HEREBY SO ORDERED.

COURT SEAL:

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THIS HONORABLE COURT, THIS 9TH DAY OF JANUARY A.D. 2025.

SCHEAPLOR R. DUNBAR
ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CIVIL LAW COURT

REGISTERED ACCORDING TO THE ACT IN 2011, 1-2025 PAGE(S) 0000076

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GoL issued over 10,974 Work Permits in 2024

-Labour Minister

The Liberian Government reports that it raised \$1.8 million in 2024 from issuance of work permits to aliens.

By Kruah Thompson

Monrovia, Liberia, January 10, 2025 - Labour Minister Cllr. Cooper Kruah announces that



Cllr. Cooper Kruah

the ministry's Alien Registration Department processed and issued 10,974 work permits to foreign nationals in 2024, reflecting a significant contribution to the country's workforce and the economy. Of the total permits, 9,468 were regular work permits, 988 gratis permits, and 556 were issued to individuals from ECOWAS and non-ECOWAS member states. A further breakdown shows 8,980 permits were granted to non-applicants, while

2,699 were issued to non-ECOWAS applicants. Among ECOWAS member applicants, 438 permits were issued to individuals from Guinea and Ivory Coast.

processed, making up 15% of the permits issued during the year under review.

In terms of gender distribution, 8,802 work permits were issued to men, while 1,315 were issued to women, showcasing the diversity of Liberia's foreign workforce.

"We met some foreigners already working in the country without valid permits. They were required to renew their permits to comply with regulations," Kruah states.

Reading data from the Ministry, he highlights the ministry's interventions in addressing unfair labor practices against workers and notes its significant contributions to the national revenue.

According to the minister, government generated over \$9 million in revenue through work permit issuance in 2024, with quarterly contributions of \$1.8 million (January-March), \$2.2 million (April-June), \$2.8 million (July-September), and \$4.3 million (October-December), respectively.

He emphasizes the Ministry's commitment to regulating foreign employment while safeguarding opportunities for Liberians. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Ecobank-Liberia loses appeal in US\$700K libel case

Ecobank-Liberia Limited lost a petition before the Civil Law Court in Monrovia to include two state institutions in a US\$700K libel case brought against as co-defendants.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, Liberia, January 10, 2025 - The ongoing US\$700,000 libel case against Ecobank-Liberia Limited takes a dramatic twist here when the bank, as a co-defendant, asked the Civil Law Court to include the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) to the lists of co-defendants. However, the request was denied by Judge Scheaplor Dunbar on Monday, January 6, 2024.

In the motion for joinder of party, the bank had opted for the two institutions to be a party to the lawsuit on grounds that the government owns

them, so everything that belongs to them, including the controversial LISGIS's account statements, which are subjects of the case, belong to the state.

Ecobank further argued that the account statement that Acting Executive

Director of LISGIS Wilmot Smith claimed was given to Ecobank-Liberia and other defendants is not his account; instead, it is owed by the government.

"The said account does not bear the name of Smith. Rather, the account in question is for and in the name of LISGIS, an agency of the government," the bank argued.

It was alleged that the

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 5



Ngafuan warns against unnecessary spending

-Urges officials to manage money approved in the Budget properly

Cabinet ministers and heads of government spending agencies are being advised to halt unnecessary spending and manage money allotted in the National Budget for their respective institutions.

By Lewis S. Teh

Monrovia, Liberia, January 10, 2025 - Finance and Development Planning Minister Augustine K Ngafuan urges his colleagues in the cabinet and heads of various governmental institutions to restrict unnecessary spending and manage the money allotted to them through the national budget.

"Let me urge you, my fellow ministers and heads of governmental institutions, to put some restrictions on all those unnecessary spending and manage the little that is in your budget", he advises.

He gave the advice Thursday, January 9, 2025, while speaking at the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex in the oldest Congo Town, at the start of a three-day workshop on the effective execution of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Budget.

Minister Nyafuan urges ministers and directors appointed around April not to have the mentality of executing their entities' or ministries' budgets within nine months, stating that doing so would result in their or ministries' budgets being exhausted before the budget year.

"If we must have an effective budget execution," he stresses, "It's imperative that we take some serious steps on restrictions or else, you might just get broke."

required the budget to be recast, filed in April, and enacted virtually in May. The same recast budget had to be reversed twice. As a result, ministries and agencies struggled with planning. Ngafuan, who is in the position for the second time, having served under Ex-president Sirleaf, emphasizes that now that ministries and agencies have a year to prepare, there should be no excuse for not doing better.

Providing an overview and introductory remarks, deputy finance minister for budget, Madam Tanneh Brunson, says the budget execution workshop is a critical step of their collective commitment to the efficient execution of the budget in translating the aspirations of the Liberian people as captured in the arrest agenda for inclusive development.

She underscores the critical role each heads of governmental institutions play as stakeholders in shaping the trajectory of the nation's development.

"Today, we converge not merely as representatives of institutions, but as stewards of the public trust, charged with ensuring efficient use of our nation's financial resources for the benefit of all," the budget minister underscores.

She recalls how recently, the 55th Legislature approved the FY 2025 National Budget at a record US\$880



Min. Augustine K Ngafuan

"While we acknowledge that certain ministers and directors were hired around April, having a budget execution mindset for nine months will deplete the budget, and your entitlement or ministry would go bankrupt shortly. This budget is for twelve months, not three, six, or nine," he cautions.

He advises heads of public agencies to do quarterly and yearly planning, stating that it will aid in budget implementation.

He urges that they grasp budget regulations better to align their budgets with the execution of their institutions, saying that two ministries can have the same budget. Still, one can execute properly while the other cannot, which he notes depends on how each ministry manages its money.

It is not your budget size that matters but how you spend it. The administration expects better budget execution this year since last year, there were transition issues that

million, adding that it is an extraordinary opportunity to drive meaningful progress across Liberia. However, with this opportunity comes profound responsibilities to ensure that every dollar is allocated and spent in alignment with the national objectives, principles, fiscal disciplines, and accountability, says Minister Brunson.

She says the workshop serves not only as a refresher but also as a capacity-strengthening platform for policymakers and technical staff within spending entities to deepen their knowledge of the public financial management arena and, specifically, the execution of the budget.

The workshop, which is being attended by scores of officials from line ministries, agencies, and commissions, including development partners, is expected to climax tomorrow, Saturday, January 11, 2025. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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CDC alarms plot against detained partisans

-Demands their immediate release

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, Liberia, January 10, 2025 - Liberia's former ruling Coalition for Democratic Change now in opposition alarms here over an alleged death threat from the governing Unity Party-led government against perceived political



opponents and citizens, who are loudly exercising free speech and raising critical questions about poor governance of the state amid unbearable cost of living across the country.

The CDC says it is bringing to the attention of the Liberian populace and international partners what it calls government's deployment of clandestine and war-time style harassment and arrest of perceived political opponents.

According to the party, the disturbing development follows series of arrests by the government, targeting its members and other citizens exercising their right to free speech here.

It complains that these individuals have allegedly fallen victim to a nefarious operation characterized by "arrest to kill," wherein they are detained in undisclosed locations and subjected to grotesque forms of mistreatment and torture by state authorities.

National Chairperson Atty. Janga Kowo says they demand the immediate release of Eric Susay, James Weah, and Andrew Sleh Lawson from Police cells, who he terms as innocent individuals arrested and subsequently detained for exercising their constitutional rights and free speech.

The party contends that their supporters were unjustly apprehended, something they believe evokes memories of Liberia's tumultuous past and signals a resurgence of authoritarian methods that once plagued the nation while demanding that the government produces their living bodies immediately.

"The CDC demands the immediate release of the living bodies of those clandestinely arrested. The unlawful detention of citizens, particularly following peaceful demonstrations, represents a significant violation of Liberia's constitution and an infringement upon the fundamental rights of its citizens, including their right to free movement. The surveillance, targeting, and subsequent arrest of these individuals not only foster an environment of fear and insecurity but also signify a disheartening trend where the state resorts to repression rather than open dialogue", Atty. Kowo laments.

Meanwhile, lawyers representing the three Liberians have filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus to the first judicial circuit,

criminal assizes "C" of Montserrado county, Liberia, sitting in its November term before his Honor A. Blamo Dixon, resident circuit judge presiding, for the release of Eric Sasay, James Weah and Andrew Sleh.

The case involves the three Liberians and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Inspector General of Police, Republic of Liberia and all those operating under the scope of the Minister's authority

RESPONDENTS.
"Petition for writ of habeas corpus Republic of Liberia, to the above-named respondents in the above entitled cause of action, greetings: you are hereby commanded to produce the living bodies of Eric Sasay, James Weah and Andrew Sleh presently detained at the headquarters of the Liberia National Police, together with the cause of such detention before the first judicial criminal

assizes "C" for Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia, sitting in its November term, A. D. 2024, at the Circuit Court house, Temple of Justice building, Monrovia, Liberia, on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at the precise hour of 11:30a.m, so that his honor, the presiding judge may make such judgment as the court seems it just concerning the detention or withholding of the above named petitioner", the writ issued by the court orders.

However, speaking further, Chairman Kowo laments that the excessive and brutal force employed against peaceful assemblies raises serious ethical concerns regarding the government's respect for civil liberties, adding that such tactics threaten the safety of citizens and undermine the core democratic principles upon which Liberia stands.

"In light of these distressing occurrences, it is imperative that the authorities are held accountable for their alleged abuses of power. CDC fears that those arrested might either be killed or transferred to a hostile country as has been the pattern with other arrested, as in the case of Sheriff and others who were traded for 10 pick-ups by the Boakai Administration to a despotic regime", he states.

He says the party also condemns the death of two Liberians in Lofa County under mysterious circumstances.

According to him, the increasing wave of mysterious deaths points to a clear lack of security in the country and calls on government to ensure security and protection of citizens and speedy investigations and prosecution of perpetrators.

"The CDC remains ready to pursue any action - both legal and political, to ensure the safe release of citizens who are illegally arrested. CDC is forever committed to upholding the right to free speech and movement without fear of retribution. As we navigate this critical moment in Liberia's history, we must collectively uphold the principles of democracy and justice, advocating for a transparent and accountable governance structure that respects the rights of all individuals", the once-ruling party underscores. Editing by Jonathan Browne

Campaign for law reform takes shape

Center for Legal Aid Support Services moves to have crucial bills lingering at the Legislature passed into law.

By Stephen G. Fellajuah

Monrovia, Liberia, January 10, 2025 - The Center for Legal Aid Support Services (CLASS), an advocacy group, begins a campaign here to ensure that every citizen in Liberia has adequate access to justice. The campaign aims to support passage of crucial bills designed to improve the country's legal framework.

The organization held a consultation workshop with media institutions on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at Corina Hotel in Monrovia, bringing together a diverse group of media professionals, civil society actors, and representatives from the Liberian Legislature to discuss the lawmaking process and ways to advocate for legal reforms.

Focus is on three key pending bills: the Legal Aid Services (LSC) Act, the Liberia Corrections Service Act, and the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Act. These bills are crucial to enhancing justice and security

During the event, Joseph Cheayan, Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Action and Development (IDAD), shared his insights on engaging the legislature. He emphasizes the importance of understanding or knowing which committees to approach and to be concise and direct in communicating with lawmakers.

"Legislators are busy and tend to focus on the benefits of proposed legislation, so it is crucial to make the case clearly and effectively," Cheayan advises. He outlines other strategies for legislative engagement, including submitting letters and petitions, holding face-to-face meetings, and engaging in policy dialogues and briefs.

Robert Myers, a Legislative Research Analyst at the Liberian Senate, points to challenges in the legislative process, noting that many lawmakers do not read legislative instruments thoroughly, which can hinder the passage of important bills. He stresses the importance of coordination with sponsors and co-sponsors of bills



in the country. CLASS is implementing the project with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Attorney George King, in an overview, emphasizes the importance of mobilizing expertise and influence of national actors, such as media institutions and CSOs. He highlights that the workshop, which is to be in a series, is part of a larger strategy to engage the legislature on law reforms, amendments, and the creation of new laws that will protect the safety and security of the Liberian people.

"We have called you here today to be part of the broader public awareness campaign on the lawmaking process. Whether easy or difficult, we need to hear about your encounters, challenges, and successes," he told the gathering.

and overcoming bureaucratic obstacles within the legislature. Some participants suggested that CLASS establish a Steering Committee to tackle specific thematic areas in engaging the legislature. This committee would help coordinate efforts and ensure that advocacy strategies are focused and effective.

The workshop represents a significant step in the institution's broader campaign to reform Liberia's legal system and improve access to justice for all citizens. By raising awareness of the lawmaking process and involving key stakeholders, it hopes to build momentum to pass critical legal reforms here.

The Center for Legal Aid Support Services (CLASS) is a private nonprofit and public interest legal services provider. Editing by Jonathan Browne

Incendie au Capitol Building : un acte criminel confirmé

Les autorités policières ont officiellement confirmé que l'incendie qui a ravagé la Rotonde du Capitol Building le 18 décembre 2024 était un acte criminel. Selon le colonel

Lors d'une conférence de presse conjointe avec le directeur général du Service national des incendies du Liberia, G. Warsuwah Barvoul, le colonel Coleman a déclaré : « Aujourd'hui, nous disposons de preuves solides qui confirment

avons envoyé des messages clairs pour qu'ils se présentent volontairement dans le cadre de l'enquête. À défaut, ils seront arrêtés », a averti le colonel Coleman, soulignant que de tels actes ne seront pas tolérés.

Il a également lancé un appel aux responsables présumés : « Ceux qui ont commis cet acte se reconnaîtront. Je les encourage à se rendre immédiatement, car s'ils ne coopèrent pas, nous interviendrons directement. »

L'incendie, qui s'est déclaré tôt le matin du 18 décembre 2024, a causé des dégâts considérables à la Rotonde, lieu de réunion des Chambres conjointes de la législature libérienne. Ce site était utilisé par des membres du bloc majoritaire de la Chambre des représentants.



Gregory Coleman, inspecteur général de la police, les premières conclusions de l'enquête pointent vers un incendie volontaire.

que cet incendie est de nature criminelle. » Des suspects sous surveillance Les enquêteurs ont identifié plusieurs suspects et ont pris contact avec eux. « Nous leur

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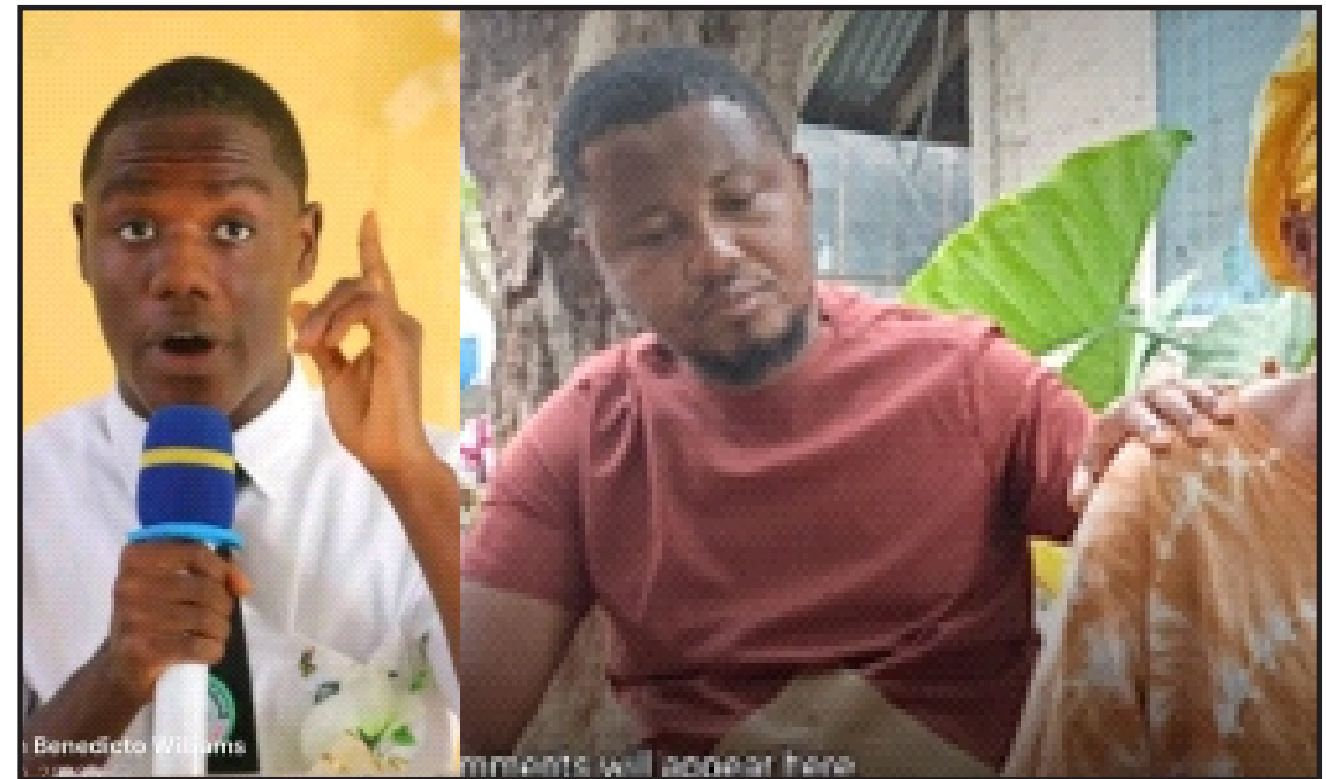
Décès à l'hôpital catholique St. Joseph : la famille soupçonne une erreur médicale

Le décès tragique d'Isaiah Benedicto Williams, 21 ans, à l'hôpital catholique St. Joseph de Congo Town, Monrovia, suscite de vives interrogations. La famille du jeune homme accuse l'établissement d'une administration abusive de médicaments, ayant entraîné sa mort, et demande l'ouverture d'une enquête. Isaiah Williams, ancien élève de la promotion 2022

de l'école catholique St. Edward, est décédé le vendredi 3 janvier 2025 à 12h46, dans le bloc opératoire de l'hôpital. Sa famille affirme qu'il a reçu une dose excessive d'un médicament inadapté, provoquant des tremblements, des démangeaisons au niveau des parties intimes et plusieurs éjaculations avant de succomber. Surnommé « le Gladiateur académique », Williams était un étudiant brillant et le seul enfant de sa mère, Mme

Veronica Tayeah. Il s'apprêtait à rejoindre l'Université des Adventistes du Septième Jour de Kigali, au Rwanda, après avoir complété le processus d'admission. Sa mère, bouleversée, relate : « L'hôpital catholique a tué mon fils, mon unique enfant, celui qui faisait ma fierté. Il avait obtenu sept distinctions lors de sa remise de diplôme à l'école St. Edward ». Mme

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Éditorial

La chute de la maison Assad

Par Daron Acemoglu

TEL AVIV – L'effondrement rapide d'une dynastie al-Assad vieille de 54 ans en Syrie vient transformer le paysage géopolitique du Moyen-Orient. L'offensive éclair de la milice islamiste Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) a surpris tous les voisins de la Syrie, comme le reste du monde. L'annonce de la [fuite](#) du président Bachar al-Assad en Russie confirme une vérité incontournable s'agissant des guerres : des conséquences inattendues peuvent s'étendre bien au-delà du champ de bataille.

L'attaque du 7 octobre 2023 perpétrée par le Hamas contre des communautés civiles israéliennes à proximité de la frontière de Gaza a provoqué plusieurs séismes dans l'ensemble du Moyen-Orient. L'impitoyable offensive menée par Israël pour détruire le Hamas à Gaza et le Hezbollah au Liban a quasiment anéanti « l'axe de résistance » iranien, tandis que les États-Unis et le Royaume-Uni ont bombardé les Houthis soutenus par l'Iran au Yémen, en réponse à leurs attaques contre des navires commerciaux internationaux.

La guerre civile syrienne a débuté en 2011, lorsque le régime d'Assad a écrasé les manifestations pacifiques du « Printemps arabe ». Puis les combats se sont largement atténués après 2015, l'intervention de la Russie, avec l'aide de l'Iran et du Hezbollah, ayant inversé le cours de la guerre en faveur d'Assad. Dernièrement, les proxies de l'Iran ayant été détruits, et les capacités de combat de la Russie étant éprouvées par la difficulté du conflit en Ukraine, les rebelles ont saisi l'opportunité.

Avec l'[appui](#) de la Turquie, et semble-t-il du Qatar, les rebelles ont facilement pris d'assaut les défenses étonnamment fragiles du régime syrien, et l'armée d'Assad a capitulé sans combattre. L'Iran et la Russie, protecteurs d'Assad, ayant précipitamment [évacué leurs troupes](#) et abandonné le dictateur à son sort, le régime syrien fondé sur la torture et les massacres n'inspirait plus la peur.

La fin de l'alliance de l'Iran avec la Syrie, principal bastion du régime de Téhéran dans le monde arabe, est vouée à redéfinir l'équilibre régional des puissances. Comme l'[exprimait](#) l'ancien vice-président iranien Mohammad Ali Abtahi deux jours avant la fuite d'Assad, un effondrement du gouvernement syrien « constituerait l'un des événements les plus importants dans l'histoire du Moyen-Orient... La résistance dans la région se retrouverait privée de soutien. Israël deviendrait la puissance dominante ».

« Hayat Tahrir al-Sham » signifie la libération du Levant, qui dans le lexique politique du premier califat inclut la Syrie, le Liban, la Jordanie et la Palestine. Le chef du groupe islamiste HTS, Abou Mohammad al-Joulani, tente néanmoins de projeter l'image d'un islamiste d'un nouveau genre. Il semble avoir tiré les enseignements nécessaires des échecs d'al-Qaïda et de l'État islamique (EI), et se considère désormais comme un pragmatique [aspirant](#) uniquement à « libérer la Syrie de son régime tyrannique ».

Signe de ce nouveau pragmatisme, Joulani a [ordonné](#) à ses hommes de laisser le Premier ministre syrien Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali continuer de gérer les institutions publiques jusqu'au [transfert officiel](#) du pouvoir. Par opposition, l'EI aurait certainement procédé à des exécutions massives de soldats et responsables publics.

Joulani n'en demeure pas moins à la tête d'une organisation islamiste radicale. Ceux qui [s'attendent](#) à ce que la Turquie tempère l'extrémisme du HTS présumant que Joulani sera le soldat obéissant d'Ankara. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que Joulani va devoir composer avec de puissantes contraintes politiques, notamment avec les nombreuses milices rivales qui se sont unies pour faire tomber Assad, ainsi qu'avec les forces kurdes qui se sont [empressées de prendre le contrôle](#) de nouveaux territoires dans l'est de la Syrie, tout en subissant les [attaques](#) des forces turques au nord.

Aux yeux du président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan, les ambitions des Kurdes de Syrie menacent d'alimenter une rébellion nationaliste au sein des communautés kurdes de Turquie. En 2019, Erdogan a ordonné à son armée de mettre en place une « zone de sécurité » de 30 kilomètres de large dans le nord de la Syrie, et de repousser les combattants kurdes loin de la frontière turque, zone dans laquelle les Kurdes avaient saisi l'opportunité de la guerre civile pour consolider une enclave autonome.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, ancien ministre israélien des Affaires étrangères, et vice-président du Centre international de Tolède pour la paix, est l'auteur de l'ouvrage intitulé [Prophets Without Honor: The 2000 Camp David Summit and the End of the Two-State Solution](#) (Oxford University Press, 2022).

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Boakai: No Silver Lining in One Year

By Seltue Karweaye

It is a well-established truth that the performance of any government is scrutinized based on the success or failure of the promises it made both before and after assuming office. During the presidential campaign of the previous year, Joseph Nyumah Boakai, representing the Unity Party, made many commitments to the Liberian populace. These promises were later encapsulated by his campaign team into what they called his 6-point Arrest Agenda. The agenda aimed to address critical issues such as agribusiness, roads, and infrastructure development, establishing the rule of law and good governance, enhancing education and human capital, and promoting tourism in Liberia.

As Boakai's administration nears the one-year mark in office, it is important to reflect on the outcomes of his governance thus far. Unfortunately, it is not an exaggeration to state that his administration has faced significant challenges and has produced a record that many would consider dismal.

Throughout the past year, there has been a conspicuous lack of effective planning and a sense of impulsiveness that has marked many of his administration's decisions, raising questions about their sincerity and commitment to fulfilling their promises. The 2024 in review has undoubtedly been a difficult journey for Boakai, who aspired to lead the country as its President and Commander-in-Chief. Regrettably, instead of delivering on the envisioned progress and prosperity, the reality for many Liberians has been one of struggle and despair. The rising costs of essential goods and services have plunged ordinary citizens into a state of economic hardship, resulting in increased pain, sorrow, and hardship. Many families are grappling with the harsh realities of hunger and poverty, as the prices for basic necessities have soared to levels that are simply unattainable for the average citizen.

The stories of struggle and disillusionment that fill the lives of most Liberians today are truly harrowing. There is an abundance of evidence to substantiate these claims, and it is all too apparent in the daily lives of the citizens. As we take stock one year into Boakai's presidency, it becomes glaringly evident that Liberia is in a more precarious position. The need for decisive and effective leadership has never been more critical, as the nation seeks to find a way out of the mounting challenges it faces.

Since taking office, the inflation rate in Liberia has surged to a concerning level of 10.74 percent, marking a significant economic challenge for the nation. Concurrently, the monetary policy rate has escalated to 17.5 percent. Such high rates of inflation are particularly harmful to local businesses, making it difficult for them to maintain profitability and for potential investors to see Liberia as an attractive destination for investment.

Food inflation is especially alarming, having reached an unprecedented high of 11.5 percent during this period. This rise has directly impacted the cost of basic necessities. For instance, the national average price for a 25 kg bag of rice has soared to LRD 3,700, reflecting a staggering 21% increase compared to the same timeframe in 2023. Currency dynamics also play a critical role in the current economic climate; as of last week, the exchange rate for the Liberian dollar stood at L\$186.2296 per US dollar.

Moreover, Liberians and various industries are facing a confluence of economic hardships. These include exorbitant energy costs, which burden both households and businesses, as well as ongoing challenges related to foreign exchange (FX) liquidity. The situation is compounded by multiple layers of import taxation that hinder trade, and the country's power supply remains inconsistent and unreliable, further straining economic activities. Amid these challenges, the political climate has also become tense, as evidenced by the arrest of protesters—a troubling incident that raises serious concerns about the state of civil liberties and the freedom to assemble in the country.

In light of these difficulties, many citizens are left wondering about the effectiveness of the so-called "Arrest Agenda." Questions are being raised regarding the whereabouts of the

economic reboot and rescue mission that President Boakai promised to deliver. In his inauguration speech delivered on January 22, 2025, he emphasized his commitment to expanding the economy through strategic investment in agriculture.

Now, as we reflect on the year since his inauguration, reports from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund reveal that Liberia's GDP ranks among the lowest in the world. The economy continues to struggle with stagnation, currently at a mere 5.3 percent growth rate. It is undeniable that the President inherited a challenging economic landscape, marked by a substantial debt profile, high levels of debt servicing, persistent shortages of foreign exchange, a fragile power supply, a depreciating Liberian dollar, and declining iron ore production—all of which have historically driven significant contributions to the economy.

Despite these initial challenges, it appears that President Boakai has managed to surpass the failures of his predecessor, George Weah, across several crucial indicators. Over the past year, his administration has significantly increased borrowing, racking up over US\$236 million in debt in one year, despite former assurances to curtail borrowing practices. This reckless financial strategy has led to a troubling escalation of the national debt, which climbed to over US\$2.5 billion by the end of September 2024, according to the latest figures released by the Debt Management Office in the third quarter fiscal report. This



alarming trend raises critical questions about fiscal responsibility and the government's long-term economic strategy moving forward.

In his inaugural address, the president made a strong commitment to both local and foreign investors, vowing that his administration would create a more favorable investment environment aimed at expanding the private sector and generating employment opportunities for Liberians. However, the situation is complicated by the continued presence of certain companies operating within Liberia's borders.

One such company is Global Tracking and Maritime Solutions (GTMS), which was previously expelled from Sierra Leone after being accused of defrauding the Sierra Leonean government of more than US\$11 million. Despite this troubling history, GTMS is currently permitted to operate in Liberia, where it provides container tracking services at all the country's ports. The company charges over \$270 for each container it tracks, leading to concerns among local businesses about the fairness of such fees.

Another notable player in this scenario is MedTech Scientific Limited (MTS), a company from Qatar that was introduced to Liberia by the Weah administration in 2019. MTS is responsible for conducting destination inspections of containers arriving at Liberia's seaports and charges a fee of \$250 per container inspected. This operational setup has raised significant concerns from local businesses that feel marginalized and burdened by the costs imposed by these foreign companies.

Overall, while the administration's goal to improve the investment climate is questionable, the ongoing operations of GTMS and MTS, especially in light of their controversial backgrounds, continue to provoke frustration and discontent among local enterprises struggling to thrive in such an environment.

If Boakai inherited a Liberia that was already divided along various lines, he has only succeeded in further polarizing the nation. The divisions that separate us have deepened significantly

during his time in office. A thorough examination of the President's appointments thus far reveals a troubling continuity with the previous administration, where a system that heavily favors the president's county of origin has played a significant role in decision-making. Specifically, the appointments to key positions have predominantly favored Lofa County, the President's home county, raising concerns about regional bias in governance.

Furthermore, basic necessities, particularly staple foods like rice, are increasingly becoming unaffordable for the average Liberian. The economic strain has reached such a level that this is perhaps one of the worst times to be ill in Liberia; the costs associated with medical care and prescription medications are now well beyond the financial reach of most citizens. This situation prompts a critical question: Is your life genuinely better now than it was before Boakai assumed power? The prospect of relief from the current state of extreme hardship seems bleak and uncertain.

It is fair to argue that the benchmarks for judging President Boakai's effectiveness as a leader are exceptionally high and difficult to achieve, given the damages set by previous administrations, but Boakai promised to rescue the country. The President must take responsibility for the hasty and thoughtless decisions he has made in a remarkably short timeframe. Many of his policies have led to profoundly negative repercussions that resonate across multiple sectors of the economy and society. As such, we find ourselves in a scenario where despair has overshadowed hope for a brighter future. This pervasive sense of hopelessness stands as a troubling indicator of the current administration's track record in governing the country effectively, raising serious concerns about the path forward for Liberia.

The current situation in Liberia under this administration is quite troubling and deserves careful examination. This President, akin to his predecessor, appears to regard the presidency not as a solemn responsibility, but rather as a coveted prize to be claimed. This perspective undermines the gravity of the office and the profound responsibilities that come with it. In a nation facing numerous challenges, the starting point for this government—and, more specifically, for this President—should have involved a period of introspection and thorough self-assessment. Such a process is critical for any leader aiming to understand the complex dynamics of governance. Unfortunately, there is a noticeable absence of these essential elements in the current administration's approach.

Supporters of the government assert that one year out of a six-year term is too brief a period to make a fair evaluation of a leadership's performance. While it is true that time is needed for policies to take root and for results to materialize, one year can still provide valuable insights. Typically, this timeframe should allow for at least faint signs of progress or hope on the horizon. Regrettably, such indicators seem to be absent at this juncture.

Moreover, the questions surrounding this President's qualifications are becoming increasingly pressing. Where is the wealth of experience we were led to expect? What has become of the self-proclaimed over forty years in government, political acumen, and idealism that his advocates touted so fervently during the 2023 presidential election? Furthermore, where is the extraordinary capacity for hard work and public service that was repeatedly emphasized? These attributes now appear to have transformed into mere hubris, fading away as the public scrutiny intensifies. The citizens of Liberia deserve more than empty promises; they require effective leadership that demonstrates accountability and a genuine commitment to improvement. It is essential for this administration to confront these challenges seriously and to re-evaluate its approach to foster a more hopeful future for the country.

Let's clarify an important point: the success of Boakai directly correlates with the success of Liberia as a nation. It is crucial to recognize that for him, the acquisition of power seems to take precedence over all other considerations, which is deeply concerning for the future of the country. Governing is not a matter of trial and error; yet, unfortunately, this administration has operated in such a manner over the past year. We have witnessed a troubling and consistent pattern of ineffective policies that have permeated most of its reform efforts.

TO BE CONTINUE NEXT EDITION

Boakai prejudices Capitol fire investigation

President Boakai comes under serious criticism here for attributing the recent fire incident at the Capitol Building to the work of hooligans even before the Police could commence an investigation.

By Lincoln G. Peters
Monrovia, Liberia, January 10, 2025 - Several critics of the Liberian government accuse President Joseph N. Boaka of prejudicing the Joint Police Investigative report on the recent



fire incident at the Capitol Building while rejecting the findings on grounds that they lack independent and organized evidence. Fire gutted the Rotunda of the Capitol Building here early Wednesday morning on December 18, 2024. The Rotunda is the Joint Chambers of the Liberian Legislature. Until what has been confirmed as an arson attack, the facility was being used by majority bloc members of the House, who controversially elected ruling UP lawmaker Richard Nagbe Koon as Speaker amid legal resistance by embattled Speaker J. Fonati Koffa.

The majority bloc failed to obtain 49 out of 73 Representatives as required by the Constitution to remove Koffa, who they accused of conflict of interest and corruption but ousted him.

The fire incident occurred in the wake of an unresolved political turmoil between members of the majority bloc led by Representative Richard N. Koon on the one hand and a minority bloc headed by embattled Speaker Fonati Koffa.

A day after the incident, the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police, Col. Gregory Coleman, announced the arrest of 73 persons who were part of an anti-government demonstration on the grounds of the Capitol a day before the fire incident. A dozen others were considered persons of interest, including opposition lawmaker Representative Frank Saah Foko, who embattled Speaker Koffa had accompanied to the Liberia National Police Headquarters for questioning because of the statement he (Rep. Foko) had made in the past.

Also among the arrested individuals were security officers who were present on duty during the night of the arson. Some were immediately released based on information provided. The fire did cause significant damage to the entire joint chamber.

Police IG Coleman, flanked by the Director General of the Liberia

National Fire and Rescue Service, G. Warsuwah Barvoul, told journalists that they had already identified suspects involved in the arson attack and that contacts had been made with messages sent for them to come forward.

“Today, January 8, 2025, at this point, we are here to officially inform the nation that we have sufficient evidence to call the act at the Capitol Building an act of arson,” Inspector General Col. Gregory Coleman told journalists here on Wednesday.

But, responding to the report on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, via a live talk show in Monrovia, Montserrado County District # 8 Ex-representative Moses A. Gray said the Police investigation is not something to trust because it will never contradict what President Boakai has already said.

According to Gray, when the fire incident occurred, the President linked it to arson, which he blamed on hooligans, despite not investigating the cause of the scene.

“The President went and told the country that the act is an act of hooligans, and such will not be tolerated, and that statement from the President prejudiced the investigation. This is a calculated attempt by the government to target members of the opposition community. Do you expect the report to differ from what the President said? Let the government call on international experts; we don’t trust this report,” he stated.

Gray also accuses the police of being a party to the conflict because, since the power struggle between the Majority bloc and the Minority lawmakers, the Liberia National Police had provided security at the facility until a fire gutted it.

Now, he argues that since the incident, Police officers on duty have not been probed or placed under any investigation. Therefore, it’s now important that they be investigated because once the police director can’t investigate them, he should recuse himself as a party to the attack.

“A character like the Police IG Gregory Coleman should recuse himself from the investigation. Firstly, look at the fight between the Majority Bloc and the Minority bloc. The police, being political, provided maximum security for the majority bloc and left the minority

vulnerable. The police, again, provided maximum security for the Capitol Building through the Majority bloc request; the police IG is on record of saying that.”

Gray continues that the Police IG and others provided maximum security for the ruling Unity Party during the 2023 campaign, something, he notes, has made IG Coleman a partisan security officer therefore, he says the Police Chief lacks what it takes to investigate and have the matter adjudicated independently.

“The evidence is so significant to the court, and those who are to adduce evidence if they are compromised, it means that the investigation is not independent. Without any investigation, IG Coleman brought some folks and called them suspects. Does that mean he will be fair?”

“Also, this man took a court detainee from behind the bar and sent him to Guinean junta,” making reference to a Guinean national arrested in Liberia and turned over to the Guinean military amid reports that he was executed for alleged subversive activities.

Former minister of youth and sports for youth development under the former ruling CDC, Isaac Doe, argues that the Police IG is a political appointee. So, they don’t expect his investigation to defer from President Boakai’s statement.

According to him, Coleman had arrested, assaulted, and intimidated peaceful Liberians exercising their constitutional right, something he believes clearly shows that the IG does not have respect for the rule of law.

But responding to these allegations, the Managing Director of the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation and campaign spokesperson for the ruling UP, Mohammed Ali, counters that whether the police like anyone or not, when they gathered their pieces of evidence, those pieces of evidence end up in court.

According to him, the court will determine whether the police did justice and due diligence to the investigation.

“I see a fair police headed by Gregory Coleman. And that is why I think the Joint Security should do its best to gather the best evidence because I can trust them as much as I want and distrust them as much as I want. It will not survive in court if they don’t gather the right evidence. I am looking at gathering the right evidence that will survive in court so that if you charge people, they can be proven guilty,” he underscores.

Bong County District #7 Representative Foday Fahnbulleh, a member of the Majority bloc, says he believes that the Police have done and will do a professional job in the investigation. Therefore, he sees a fair, transparent, and objective investigation.

“The report from the police about arson is something we expected due to statements and actions from some people. When somebody threatened to burn the building, and others are fighting, and what they said

Jobless UPists stormed party Hq.

The fight for inclusion in the party’s job listing has brought bad blood among members of the ruling Unity Party.

By Lincoln G. Peters
Friday, January 10, 2025/ The Headquarters of the ruling Unity Party on Broad Street nearly turned into a boxing ring on Thursday when some Youth wing members disrupted a planned press conference over jobs neglect. The UP headquarters, which was very quiet and peaceful before the arrival of the party’s National Youth Chairman, Mr. Togar M. Cephus, and his entourage, erupted into total pandemonium when youthful members resisted hosting the press conference. The quiet scene immediately became ugly with the exchange of invectives as sleeves were rolled off for a fistfight. It took some divine intervention for the parties to be kept apart. It all started when Cephus and his entourage arrived at the party’s headquarters to conduct a press conference ahead of its first anniversary in power. Minutes after the leadership of the youth wing arrived, other youthful partisans who claimed to have been neglected doing the job distribution process entered their numbers, disrupting the entire process. They chanted slogans as they climbed on tables while creating ugly scenes on the grounds that

headquarters. " We are angry and frustrated today because our people have forgotten us. The party we slept in the rain for has turned its back on us. We don't have a job. We are seeing strange people that know nothing about this in top positions while we are here struggling even to get food to eat," he stated. Responding to his members, Mr. Cephus said he sympathized with his colleagues, and they have decided to address their concerns. He explained that the issue of jobless partisans will be part of their agenda for the party’s upcoming meeting in Nimbia County from January 30, 2025 - February 2, 2025. He said the scheduled meeting is intended to consolidate their base to face those reactionaries in government. Mr. Cephus pointed out that they had taken their time to speak with those he described as strangers who had hijacked the revolution, saying that it was time for them to put effort into addressing joblessness. "As a good leader, it's important to listen to the plight of your people. We have come here today because many of our young people have been having



those who have come to address the press are those who are benefiting from the process. The disgruntled UP youths claimed that the leadership has not been communicating with them for a year now, and their plights have been forgotten while jobs are given to strangers. One of the disgruntled young partisans who spoke to journalists on the scene said their leaders had abandoned them during the job distribution. Mr. David Nagbe further told journalists that when the government took office, they engaged senior partisans within the party and other youths who were provided jobs but turned their back on them. Nagbe stated that since the UP took office nearly a year ago, January 9, 2025, was the first time for the party youth leadership to come to the party

a series of challenges. And we have tried our best to ensure that young people are strategic. Today, we are here to consolidate our efforts to ensure that young people benefit from what they sacrificed for in 2023," he disclosed. " We have come today to send a caveat to those who think they will hijack our revolution: it will not happen. We know this revolution is a revolution of the young people, and we must deliver in the interest of the young people. We want to warn those occupying government offices yet betraying the intent of the Rescue Mission. The return of the National Youth Congress will be nothing short of robust and revolutionary sweeping," he concluded. Edited by Othello B. Garblah.

A former Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Sirleaf administration is concerned about what she terms a lack of clarity surrounding the Supreme Court of Liberia's opinion on the ongoing leadership crisis in the House of Representatives.

Monrovia, Liberia,
January 10, 2025 -
Former Foreign
Minister Olubanke King
Akerele raises concerns here

actions taken by members of the House, specifically regarding the removal of Speaker J. Fonati Koffa, but took no definitive stance against either the majority bloc or Speaker Koffa

Speaking after a retreat organized by Voices of Elders on Thursday, January 9, 2025, she expressed frustration over the ambiguity of the ruling, which has left many citizens confused.

"That the Minister of Justice had stated the government is implementing the decision, but the lack of a unified explanation from legal experts has made it difficult for the public to grasp its full implications", she notes.

The glaring ambiguity led to the Executive Branch of the government, through the Ministry of Justice, providing interpretation on the side of the majority bloc that it publicly declared support for.

Despite not being a legal professional, Akerele, who described herself as a "first-class patriot," insists that the public deserves clear and consistent interpretations to understand the High Court's opinion better.

However, she hopes for a meeting with President Joseph Nyuma Boakai to seek further clarification on the matter, contrasting this with her previous experience when President George Weah

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over the lack of clarity surrounding the Supreme Court of Liberia's opinion on the ongoing leadership crisis in the House of Representatives.

The High Court's ambiguous opinion, issued on December 6, 2024, addresses the constitutional validity of

and his supporters.

Madam Akerlele emphasizes that the ruling has been subject to various interpretations, noting, "Especially the term *ultra vires*", while calling for clearer guidance from professional legal bodies like the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA).



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The advertisement features a vibrant yellow background with colorful streamers. In the center, a man and a woman are shown celebrating. The man is holding a smartphone and a small trophy, while the woman is holding a smartphone and a small trophy. Behind them are several prizes, including a motorcycle, a television, and bags of rice. The prizes are labeled with the MoMo logo. The overall theme is one of excitement and winning rewards.

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A collage of various New Dawn publications, including a newspaper, a calendar, a magazine, and a brochure, all featuring the New Dawn logo and colorful abstract designs.

A photograph of a large industrial paper mill machine, likely a paper press or dryer. The machine is white and features a large horizontal roller. Above the roller is a control panel with a digital display and various buttons. The machine is situated in a factory environment with a colorful, curved wall in the background.